NEW REFEREE COURSE FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

If you have a question about the New Referee Course Online that isn't answered here or at the New Referee Course Logistics page please send the question in an email to bryan.gruchow@gmail.com

List of questions answered below:

Q1: Where does completing the New Referee Course allow me to referee?
Q2: I tried to create a new account at wisref.gameofficials.org but I couldn't because I need a code number how can the sign up.
Q3: If I do not pass the online portion, is there a way I can retake it prior to the in-person class or is she just out? I have looked on the website and can't seem to find any information regarding this. It says attempt one. Please advise, I am hoping to complete this course.
Q4: I wanted to know how exactly the presentations and quizzes are set up and how many presentations and quizzes there are.
Q5: Are there any fees above those paid online or is it all paid.
Q6: Do I have to read all the recommended books before the in-person course? The first 3 are do-able. But the Advice for Referees is very thick and not very exciting so i don’t know that he will get that book done any time soon.
Q7: What should my daughter study to be able to pass the Grade 8/9 USSF Referee Exam (80%) to successfully complete the course.
Q8: Should she just review the online quiz again?
Q9: This is the first time we have heard that there is an exam at the course. Can she retake this if she does not get 80%?
Q10: When is she supposed to read the primary referee resources, Laws of the Game and Guide to Procedures. Then review Information for New Referees and Advice to Referees. This is the first time we heard about this.
She has lots of homework each day, so I don't see how she can fit reading this referee resources in now. All of this is new information to us.
Q11: Where do we buy whistle, a digital wristwatch with chronograph features and assistant referee flags?
Q12: We plan to borrow flags etc...from a family friend that no longer refs but I don't think we will be able to get them in time for the class next week (they have been on vacation). Will that be a problem?
Q13: Can I purchase a red referee shirt?
Q14: Do I need the Velcro disc?
Q15: Is there an official coin, or does he just use one from his pocket?
Q16: Are some flag sets more enduring than others?
Q17: Are some whistles nicer than others?
Q18: Are some notepads easier to use than others?
Q19: Are some pocket wallets better quality than others?
Q20: Is there a neck lanyard? (that is, how does he keep a wrist lanyard, a flag, a score pad and pencil, etc. all at his fingertips plus a whistle?)
Q21: Do I have to have black tennis shoes?

Q22: Do the yellow card and caution mean the same thing?
Q23: I'm wondering what I absolutely need to get this first year or if he could use some player uniform items?
Q24: Is this class only offered once? My son turns 12 during the season and would like to take this class.
Q25: How many games per weekend is a 12 year old usually required to referee?
Q26: Are the games scheduled for a 12 year old referee as far-flung around Dane County as they are for players in the Oregon Soccer Club?
Q27: When are the in-person courses offered? I want to confirm that my son will be available before I sign him up for the course.
Q28: My son/daughter has dyslexia. Could I provide him/her help by reading the exam questions to him/her?
Q29: I am not able to attend at 4:30 for the parent portion. Are there handouts provided?
Q30: The online materials are identified as Grade 8 which confused me. My referee is 12 soon to be 13.
Q31: I would like to sign up for soccer referee training but the sign up only states the location as Madison, please give me the address of the location of the training.
Q32: My son/daughter is signed up for the ref class. He/she has been really sick with influenza for a week and a half and has had to miss a ton of school. I'm wondering if it would be possible for him/her to attend a later ref class instead. I'm just not sure that he/she will be up for the class this weekend and I want him/her to get as much out of it as possible. Could you let me know if that would be possible?
Q33: Is the $70 fee for everything or is it $70 per portion of the class (meaning online & class time)?
Q34: What if games are not scheduled mid-August?
Q35: How does the schedules work if the kids have a game of their own (scheduled or make-up)? How do they get subs?
Q36: Can they ref as many games or as few as they want?
Q37: Do they get paid for these games?
Q38: Do they get paid as head ref and/or as sideline ref?
Q39: What age of kids (U9, U10, etc) are they allowed to ref? He is 13 years old.
Q40: Do they teach in the class how to deal with kids, coaches and parents that may not be appropriate?

Q1: Where does completing the New Referee Course allow me to referee?
A1: The New Referee Course is a United States Soccer Federation course for officiating USSF affiliated outdoor soccer games.

- The geographic boundaries are anywhere within the US including territories; however, permission to travel would be required to officiate outside of Wisconsin.
- Local USSF-affiliated competitions include most Club In-House Leagues, all MAYSA Leagues, all WYSA Leagues, Regional Leagues, National Leagues, most area tournaments and many Adult Leagues.
- There are some age, experience and Grade Level requirements for some competitions.

- Experienced USSF referees officiate MLS games and are eligible for selection to officiate FIFA competitions including the FIFA World Cup.
- After successfully completing the course, a referee would be eligible to accept game assignments to USSF sanctioned games; however, there are age, grade level and experience requirements to some competitions.
- There are annual requirements to maintain your USSF badge.
- Some competitions that this course DOES NOT certify a referee to officiate include:
    - Indoor Soccer – each facility sets its own officiating requirements and typically hires officials as part-time employees
    - High School – WIAA sets its own officiating requirements
    - College/University – NISOA sets its own officiating requirements
    - Futsal – This requires completing a different USSF course however, one of the prerequisites to that course is being currently registered as a USSF referee.
    - Non-USSF Sanctioned Tournaments – each tournament sets officiating requirements
    - Non-USSF Affiliated Leagues – each league sets officiating requirements

Q2: I tried to create a new account at wisref.gameofficials.org but I couldn't because I need a code number how can the sign up.
A2: This is unusual. I have access to the system and could research individual situations. Depending on the course there are different codes that may be required. Send an email to bryan.gruchow@gmail.com with your name, the course number you intend to register and the problem you are encountering. If possible include a screen shot.

Q3: If I do not pass the online portion, is there a way I can retake it prior to the in-person class or is she just out? I have looked on the website and can't seem to find any information regarding this. It says attempt one. Please advise, I am hoping to complete this course.
A3: Each student may retake the online session as many times as they choose. Instructors have access to referee candidate online progress. Without successfully completing the online session, you will not be allowed to complete the classroom sessions. If you choose not to take the course:
1. You could request a refund, (there is a $5 processing fee.)
2. You could apply the payment to a future course

Q4: I wanted to know how exactly the presentations and quizzes are set up and how many presentations and quizzes there are.
A4: The online preparation asks the students to watch 18 videos created by USSF and take 13 quizzes. At this time, it seems that the last two videos and two quizzes are missing. Complete what is available.

Q5: Are there any fees above those paid online or is it all paid?

A5: There are no additional USSF or training fees for this badge year; however, there are additional expenses, especially in a referee's first year, uniforms, whistles, flags and other referee gear and equipment.
As a referee starts to earn money, I suggest that they pay their parents back for their course fees and then spend some of their earnings on upgrading or adding to their referee gear.
Refereeing is essentially running a business. I believe that a referee needs to officiate 5-8 games per season to 'break even.'
There are annual expenses as USSF training and registration is required annually to maintain a referee's certification.

Q6: Do I have to read all the books recommended before the in-person course? I don't know that he will get those other books done any time soon.
A6: The first two resources are critical. Each referee must be familiar with the US Soccer Laws of the Game and Guide to Procedures. The other resources will improve his game management and law application at the field.

Q7: What should my daughter study to be able to pass the Grade 8/9 USSF Referee Exam (80%) to successfully complete the course?
A7: She should focus on the primary USSF Referee resources, Laws of the Game and Guide to Procedures (the fourth official information is relevant to understanding game responsibilities.)

Q8: Should she just review the online quiz again?
A8: No. The online quiz is not enough information to successfully complete the USSF Referee Exam.

Q9: This is the first time we have heard that there is an exam at the Saturday course. Can she retake this if she does not get 80%?
A9: Yes. Students can make arrangements to retake the exam prior to the start of the soccer season. Once the season begins we must deny those retake opportunities as instructors are active officials and schedules become hectic.

Q10: When is she supposed to read the primary referee resources, Laws of the Game and Guide to Procedures? Then review Information for New Referees and Advice to Referees. This is the first time we heard about this.
She has lots of homework each day, so I don't see how she can fit reading this referee resources in now. All of this is new information to us.
A10: Perhaps adding the responsibilities of officiating soccer matches to her busy schedule is not an ideal step for her to take at this time. We will offer New Referee Courses before the each season. Maybe the late summer would be a better time for her to attempt the course.

- Refereeing is likely to be the closest thing to running a business that your daughter has experienced or, she could choose to make soccer officiating a hobby.
- Referees are responsible for:
    - Purchasing and caring for referee uniforms/gear

    - Managing schedules and travel for game assignments
    - Accounting for expenses, earnings and profits, (including paying parents back!) and potentially creating/filing tax forms
    - Annual recertification requirements (continuing education)
    - Perhaps upgrading to the next referee grade sometime in the future
    - As well as understanding and applying the Laws of the Game and Guide to Procedures at each of her game assignments
- Some of material on the exam will be presented and explained but, we do not have enough time to cover all the material in class.

Q11: Where do we buy whistle, a digital wristwatch with chronograph features and assistant referee flags?
A11: Referee uniforms and equipment (including starter-kits) can be purchased in several ways. Please review step 5 on the New Referee Course Logistics page at www.masru.org under "Referee Training"

Q12: We plan to borrow flags etc...from a family friend that no longer refs but I don't think we will be able to get them in time for the class next week (they have been on vacation). Will that be a problem?
A12: For the course that should be fine. There will be several students that will have an extra flag as those are sold in sets of two.

Q13: Can I purchase a red referee shirt?
A13: Not yet. Gold must be the first color, unless your home club wears gold, then you could start out with green or blue and purchase a gold jersey as your second color. You will need a gold jersey to work at tournaments and as an assistant referee. You might spend some earnings on a red jersey for next season.

Q14: Do I need the Velcro disc?
A14: The Madison Area Soccer Referee Unit has a supply if Velcro discs that we hope to provide if you successfully complete the course. Most referee jerseys are made with the loop Velcro sewn on. The discs are made with the hook Velcro on one side and a sticky-back to attach on the back of the USSF badge. This allows for a convenient way for him to take his badge off his jersey when he launders his uniform.

Q15: Is there an official coin, or does he just use one from his pocket?
A15: There is no official coin but, we recommend something more substantial than a quarter.

Q16: Are some flag sets more enduring than others?
A16: Not really. Every few years manufacturers create and offer a new style or pattern. Do not even consider purchasing an electronic flag set until you are prepared to officiate professional soccer games.

Q17: Are some whistles nicer than others?

A17: Yes but, you will add to your whistle collection throughout your officiating career. I know referees that have more than 30 different types/styles of whistles but they all seem to have their favorite one. Additional whistles are another thing you might want to spend some of your earnings on.

Q18: Are some notepads easier to use than others?
A18: I think you are referring to the paper used inside a data wallet. Those pads can be confusing. Many referees do not use the “pads” but, instead use blank paper folded inside their data wallet, or even the blank back-side of the paper from the pad sold with the data wallet.

Q19: Are some pocket wallets better quality than others?
A19: Yes but, even the most basic data wallet will last several seasons before you might want to spend some of your earnings on another one. The data wallet is where the referee keeps the record of the game for completing the online game report when he/she gets home.

Q20: Is there a neck lanyard? (that is, how does he keep a wrist lanyard, a flag, a score pad and pencil, etc. all at his fingertips plus a whistle?)
A20: For safety, a referee cannot wear his/her whistle around the neck. Some referees wrap the lanyard around their hands to hold their whistle. There are wrist lanyards and even finger lanyards. Some referees do not use a lanyard at all but, carry their whistle in their hands.
During the game only the referee carries a whistle and only assistant referees, or club linesmen, carry flags. Everything else goes into your pockets until needed.

Q21: Do I have to have black tennis shoes?
A21: Effectively yes; however, brand logos are acceptable.

Q22: Do the yellow card and caution mean the same thing?
A22: Yes.

Q23: I'm wondering what I absolutely need to get this first year or if he could use some player uniform items?

a. Shorts - he can wear his black shorts from his soccer uniform. Yes or no?

A23a: No. Referee shorts are recommended. He will need pockets to carry some equipment on the field.

b. Socks - he can wear his black socks from his soccer uniform. Yes or no?

A23b: Possible. There are two styles of referee socks. He could wear his team socks to officiate as long as his uniform socks are one of those styles. To review the styles go to officials sports.com

c. Shoes - he can wear his soccer shoes. Yes or no?

A23c: Not recommended, especially if he will be officiating many games at tournaments. Comfortable, black, running shoes are best. Logos are permitted.

Q24: Is this class only offered once? My son turns 12 during the season and would like to take this class.
A24: A couple of problems:

- The online registration system is set up to decline registration for students younger than 12 years-old as of the course date
- Your son would not be eligible to accept any game assignments until after his account is activated (after his birth date)
- By the time he could begin looking for game assignments, he will have missed a significant part of the season and there may be limited remaining appropriate assignments available

The Madison Area Soccer Referee Unit offers the New Referee Course several times prior to each season. Your son should wait and take the course after he turns 12 years-old.

Q25: How many games per weekend is a 12 year old usually required to referee?
A25: Referees are responsible for creating and completing their own schedules. There are no game minimums but, to earn money (especially after the expenses of equipment in the first year) I recommend at least 5-10 games per season.

Q26: Are the games scheduled for a 12 year old referee as far-flung around Dane County as they are for players in our club?
A26: Although there are games just about everywhere, I suggest sticking to games within biking distance of your house. We will explain how to do this at the course.

Q27: When are the in-person courses offered? I want to confirm that my son will be available before I sign him up for the course.
A27: The list of classroom sessions is at: www.wisref.org, click REFEREE COURSES, then click NEW REFEREE COURSE ONLINE. Each course represents the date and site of a classroom session. Students must complete the online session prior to attending the classroom session but, students must register for a classroom session in order to access the online

Q28: My son/daughter has dyslexia. Could I provide him/her help by reading the exam questions to him/her?
A28: That will be fine. I will contact you with those logistics.

Q29: I am not able to attend at 4:30pm for the parent portion. Are there handouts provided?
A29: There is limited assigning information in the student handouts but, it is always better see the demonstration.
Once your referee has an active assigning system identity (a few weeks after the course) you should contact and work with your local club's Referee Assignor to learn how they use the system for local games.

Q30: The online materials are identified as Grade 8 which confused me. My referee is 12 soon to be 13.

A30: Yes that is the correct material. In Wisconsin, we teach only Grade 8 material so that when your referee turns 14, he/she will automatically be upgraded from Grade 9 to Grade 8.

Q31: I would like to sign up for soccer referee training but the sign up only states the location as Madison, please give me the address of the location of the training.
A31: If you click the blue course number you will access the course details which include the address for the course facility.

Q32: My son/daughter is signed up for the ref class. He/she has been really sick with influenza for a week and a half and has had to miss a ton of school. I'm wondering if it would be possible for him/her to attend a later ref class instead. I'm just not sure that he/she will be up for the class this weekend and I want him/her to get as much out of it as possible. Could you let me know if that would be possible?
A32: I will remove him/her from the course roster. Once removed, you would have the opportunity to register for another referee course in the future. The payment would remain credited to your account. If you are certain that you will not attend a future referee course, please confirm your request a refund. There is $5 processing fee for refunds.

Q33: Is the $70 fee for everything or is it $70 per portion of the class (meaning online & class time)?
A33: The $70 fee covers the full New Referee Course and USSF registration. Consider this an annual expense. There are other costs to begin officiating (uniforms and equipment)

Q34: What if games are not scheduled mid-August?
A34: Mid-August is usually when the MAYSA Classic and Recreational League schedules are finalized.

Q35: How does the schedules work if the kids have a game of their own (scheduled or make-up)? How do they get subs?
A35: As soon as a referee is aware of a schedule conflict, they must contact the referee assignor for that game. No showing a game assignment risks the referee's assigning privileges.

Q36: Can they ref as many games or as few as they want?
A36: The maximum number of games a referee can take is five per day. The only exceptions are tournament assignments.

Q37: Do they get paid for these games?
A37: Every game assignment has through the online assigning system has a referee fee. Current fees are kept at www.masru.org under Referee Assignments

Q38: Do they get paid as head ref and/or as sideline ref?

A38: The referee fee is based on the league, the player age group and the referee position you cover. Current fees are kept at www.masru.org under Referee Assignments

Q39: What age of kids (U9, U10, etc) are they allowed to ref? He is 13 years old.
A39: As general guidelines the referee should:

a. Not select/accept an assignment to any game where a family member is a participant
b. Not select/accept an assignment as Referee for any game where the players are less than two-years younger than yourself (example: U12 = Under 12 = most players are 11 years old. That means a referee should be at least 13 years old to officiate a U12.)
c. Not select/accept any game assignments as Assistant Referee for any game where the players are your age or older (example: U13 = Under 13 = most players are 12 years old. That means a referee should be at least 13 years old to AR a U13 game.) Also the teams playing cannot play in the same league that the referee's team plays in.
d. Not select/accept an assignment for any league that you would be eligible to play in as a player.

Q40: Do they teach in the class how to deal with kids, coaches and parents that may not be appropriate?
A40: Although most games are played without incident, even at the youngest ages, there are games that test the referee’s people management skills. Players, coaches and spectators always have a favorite player, or team. Sometimes those stakeholders get frustrated about an event on or off the field and choose to vent that frustration at a younger, easy target – the referee. We will offer some strategies to handle this situation at the course as well as additional materials.